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APRAIS Celebrates Adoption of Restraint and Seclusion Amendment in ESEA

The Senate HELP Committee adopts Senator Chris Murphy's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) amendment to limit restraint and seclusion in schools

WASHINGTON, D.C. – APRAIS celebrates the Senate HELP Committee's adoption of Senator Chris Murphy's amendment in ESEA. The amendment requires the State plan to include how the State educational agency will protect each student from physical or mental abuse [including restraint and seclusion] in school.

"We are very grateful for Senator Murphy's persistent leadership in ensuring protections for students through the introduction of this amendment," says Barb Trader, the executive director of TASH, the convening organization of APRAIS. "Too many states permit restraint and seclusion to be used as part of a student's behavior plan. Restraint and seclusion should be used only in the case of emergencies. These techniques are too dangerous to a student's mental and physical health to be used for discipline or convenience. Non-emergency use of restraint and seclusion crosses the line to abuse, and this amendment provides some leverage to curtail that use."

APRAIS supports Senator Murphy's amendment as a step forward, even if it is not the solution we seek, which is a federal floor of protection through legislation. We do, however, urge final language to protect each student from any physical restraint or seclusion imposed for reasons other than "danger of immediate physical harm." We can no longer endure harm to vulnerable children as a result of abusive practices when decades of research equip education professionals with positive, safe, and effective alternatives. APRAIS thanks Senator Chris Murphy for his strong leadership to ensure the protection of school children from abusive use of restraint and seclusion by introducing the amendment to the reauthorization of the ESEA.

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The Alliance to Prevent Restraint, Aversive Interventions and Seclusion (APRAIS) was founded in 2004 with a mission to eliminate the use of aversive interventions, restraint and seclusion to respond to or control the behavior of children and youth. To learn more about APRIAS, visit www.tash.org/aprais.